

**MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY JULY 10, 2023
4:35 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing, Monday, July 10, at 4:35 p.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201 Waycross, Georgia 31501 with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.

CALL TO ORDER	Chairman Elmer Thrift
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	Commissioner Steve Barnard, Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Timmy Lucas, Commissioner Jerry Pope
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	None
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager Scott Moye; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Dorminey Herzog
PRESS	Danny Bartlett - WJH
INVOCATION	The invocation was waived from Work Session
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was waived from Work Session

Call to Order:

Chairman Thrift called to order the public hearing for multiple applications.

1st application is a request to rezone parcel no. 069F01 010 B – Lynell Lane.

2nd application is a request to close/abandon a portion of Mary Street.

3rd application is a request to close/abandon a portion of West Church Street.

Rezoning Request – Parcel 069F01 010 B – Lynell Lane

A request has been made by Michelle and Barry Cox, landowner, to rezone their property on parcel number “069F01 010 B” from A-3 Agriculture to A Agriculture so as to permit the use of additional single-wide mobile homes to be located on the property. The request for rezoning was approved by the Waycross-Ware County Planning Commission at the meeting held on June 8, 2023.

Chairman Thrift asked Mrs. Cox to come forward and speak to the Commission. Mrs. Cox said she has owned this property for 15 years and currently has five single wide mobile homes on this property. She has another one that she would like to relocate to this property. Commissioner Lucas Stated that he met with Mrs. Cox to see inspect the mobile home and thought it looked brand new. He said the rent is very affordable for this area. Commissioner Burse spoke up to say that he has no problem with the rezoning as there is already another single wide there, and the place is well kept. Commissioner Lucas verified with Mrs. Cox that her renters are long term, staying with her for years.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Cox and then asked if there was anyone present who opposed the rezoning request. No opposition was present.

Road Closure/Abandonment Request– Mary Street

Cathy Mixon has requested to close/abandon the platted portion of Mary Street from South Augusta Avenue to University Blvd. Mrs. Mixon owns both sides of the road. This portion of Mary Street has never been opened.

The landowner was not present, so the Chairman asked Planning and Codes Director James Shubert to step forward and explain the application. He said Mrs. Mixon is doing a redevelopment of that area and would like to close the roadway to obtain ownership of the right of way and continue with her plans. Commissioner Lucas asked for Director Shubert's opinion, and he said the request should be approved. Chairman Thrift asked if a building was being put on that site. Director Shubert said that a couple of buildings would be put just south of that location. He also said he thought she was looking at putting some residential structures on the University Blvd. side.

Commissioner Pope said there seemed to be a lot of drainage problems in that area and asked if closing this road would create future problems. Director Shubert said there is no easement or drainage on that portion of the road. The existing drainage runs north and south off of South Georgia Parkway. Commissioner Pope asked if the Public Works Director had cleared this closure, and Director Shubert said that he was okay with it.

The Chairman asked if there was anyone present who opposed the road closure request. No opposition was present.

Road Closure/Abandonment Request – West Church Street

James and Deborah Thigpen have requested to close/abandon a portion of West Church Street from 733 feet, more or less, or Railroad Avenue to North Clough Bay Road. The applicant owns the west side of the road. The road is located in Wareboro Community in Land Lot 128 of the 8th Land District.

Chairman Thrift asked Director Shubert to give more information on this application. Director Shubert directed the Commissioners' attention to the map displayed on the wall monitor, explaining that the landowners wish to close a portion of West Church Street (1,582 feet in length) to obtain the right of way. He said although the original closure request was for a shorter portion, he is recommending that the entire right of way be closed due to the drainage structures being there and there being a need for a cul-de-sac. He said he met with the Public Works Director, and they recommend that Commission approve the road closure contingent upon Ware County removing the two drainage structures that are in the old road bed. He explained that the road was open many years ago, but it is now covered with trees. There is a 24-inch and an 18-inch pipe crossing the old road bed which need to be removed and allow water to be free flowing to the pond. Chairman Thrift asked if the adjoining property owners (V. Aldridge) are okay with the road closure. Director Shubert said they are as long as the drainage structure is addressed.

Commissioner Burse asked to clarify the rationale for removing the pipe is in case there is a blockage. Director Shubert explained if the pipe is not removed that a blockage would back

water up to Pine Valley Rd. The pipes are almost blocked now. Commissioner Pope asked if an open ditch would be left where the pipes are now. He said it would. Chairman Thrift asked PW Director Brooks if leaving an open ditch would create a drainage problem. Director Brooks explained that the area is almost like a creek bottom slough. Debris has floated up to the pipes. If the road is closed, the County cannot get to the pipes to unclog them. They feel it would be best to take the pipes out. His department can get to the pipes by going in through the thicket of trees with the mini excavator.

The Chairman asked if anyone is using any portion of the road. Director Shubert said the adjoining owner on the south side uses it park campers and vehicles. Once the surveying is complete, this landowner will obtain the top half of the right of way. Commissioner Barnard asked if the old alley would be split between the two owners with each obtaining half of it all the way through. Director Shubert said they would.

Chairman Thrift asked PW Director Brooks and P&C Director Shubert if they had a problem with closing this road. They said they did not. Director Shubert said that when a motion was made to close the road, the motion would need to be contingent upon removal of the drain structures. PW Director Brooks said that would give his department time to remove the pipes. Commissioner Lucas asked how much time would be needed. Director Brooks asked for a couple of weeks to have time to schedule a piece of equipment for the pipe removal. Commissioner Lucas asked if the end of August would be sufficient. Director Brooks said it would, and he would let Director Shubert know once the pipe was removed. Chairman Thrift thanked them both for the information.

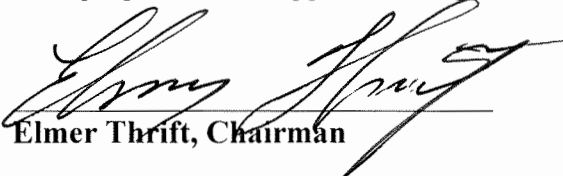
The Chairman asked if there was anyone present who opposed the road closure request. No opposition was present.

CLOSURE

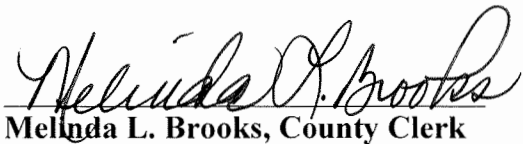
Motion was made by Commissioner Burse to close the public hearing, with Commissioner Lucas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The public hearing was closed at 4:49 p.m.

Date proposed to be approved: August 14, 2023


Elmer Thrift, Chairman

ATTEST:


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk

8/17/2023
Date